

163. *LARUS CANUS* Linn. Common Gull.

Tacz. p. 1033 ; Dresser, p. 829.

This is another species that I include upon the authority of Bianchi ; a specimen was obtained at Yingtzu, March 31, 1901.

164. *LARUS VEGÆ* Palmén. Eastern Herring-Gull.

Tacz. p. 1028 ; Dresser, p. 834.

a. ♂ juv. Steppes, near Tsi-tsi-ha. [Sept. 1886.]

165. *PODICIPES CRISTATUS* (Linn.). Great Crested Grebe.

Tacz. p. 1251 ; Dresser, p. 877.

Capt. Karpow procured a specimen at Yingtzu on April 4, 1901 (*Bianchi*).

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XXIII.—*On the Tail-feathers of the Dabchick.*

By W. P. PYCRAFT, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

(Text-figure 10.)

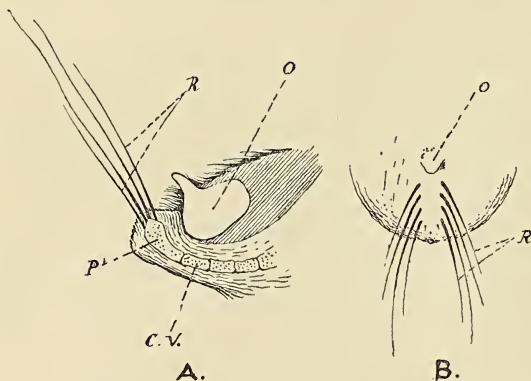
THE following short account of the number and arrangement of the tail-feathers of the Dabchick (*Podiceps fluviatilis*) is the result of a more minute examination of the disposition of these feathers, undertaken at the request of Dr. Sclater, and as a supplement to my paper on this subject published in the volume of 'The Ibis' for 1907 (p. 472).

In that paper these feathers were described as "semi-plumous in character . . . . and not, apparently, exceeding eight in number." I also pointed out that they are arranged, not in a continuous series, or, after the fashion of normal tail-feathers, in a close series, but, on the contrary, are set in the form of a horseshoe, of which the free ends are directed upwards, and so lie alternately in relation one to another.

This description is practically confirmed in detail by my later work ; though I still find it difficult to decide as to whether

some of the apparent coverts are not in reality degenerate rectrices ; but on the whole it does not appear that more than eight can be regarded as answering to rectrices. These, with their coverts, are arranged in a double series, one on either side of the middle line and running parallel with one another, leaving a well-marked apertion between them. The slight concavity which these two rows enclosed in the specimen originally examined—which caused me to describe them as arranged in the form of a horseshoe—was, I find, an individual peculiarity. As a matter of fact, the two rows—eliminating the coverts—run parallel one to the

Text-fig. 10.

Tail-feathers of *Podiceps fluviatilis*.

A. Section through the tail, exposing the caudal vertebræ, to shew the relation of the rectrices to the pygostyle.

B. Superficial appearance of the bases of the rectrices.

C.V.=Caudal vertebræ.

P.=Pygostyle.

O.=Oil-gland.

R.=Rectrices.

other, and, be it noted, have their ventral aspects turned towards each other, as in many Gallinaceous birds.

This peculiar arrangement would seem to have come about as a consequence of the degeneration of the caudal vertebræ, and the shortening of this region of the vertebral column attendant thereon : the rectrices having been thus slowly

drawn backwards and inwards towards the middle line till they are now divided only by a narrow space. Finally, in this degenerate tail all the rectrices are attached at their bases to the pygostyle, whereas in the normally developed rectrices the outermost, at any rate, are divorced therefrom.

The somewhat thicker shaft is practically the only distinguishing character between these rectrices and their coverts.

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XXIV.—*Contributions to the Ornithology of Egypt.*—No. II.  
*Birds of the Province of Giza.* Part 2\*. By MICHAEL J. NICOLL, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

69. *ORIOIUS GALBULA.*

*Oriolus galbula* Shelley, p. 156.

The Golden Oriole is a regular visitor during the spring and autumn migrations. I have frequently heard it singing in the spring. In the autumn nearly all those I have met with have been immature birds. The few adult males seen during the autumn are amongst the first arrivals.

During the spring migration of 1909 great numbers of Golden Orioles frequented the mulberry-trees in the Giza Zoological Gardens.

70. *LANIUS EXCUBITOR ELEGANS.*

*Lanius lathora* Shelley, p. 115.

*Lanius excubitor elegans* Swains.; Hartert, Vög. d. pal. Fauna, iv. p. 427.

This form of the Great Grey Shrike is a resident in Egypt and breeds in suitable localities in the Province.

It has not previously been recorded as a breeding species in Egypt. I have not yet met with the typical *L. excubitor* in that country.

\* Continued from above, p. 302. The figure of *Scotocerca inquieta* in the first part of this paper (Plate IV.) is accurate as regards its attitude, but is too dark on the upper parts. Unfortunately it was not possible to submit the coloured proof to the author for approval.—M. J. N.